

**Executive Committee for Highway Safety  
Seat Belt Working Group  
Meeting Minutes – Mtg. #4  
January 12, 2005**

**Location:**

GHSP Office, 215 E. Lane Street @ 1:00 p.m.

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Darrell Jernigan	Don Nail	Jill Lucas	Kelly Becker
Mark McDonald	Rosa Gill	Stephen Lowry	Bill Hall
Terry Hopkins	Cliff Braam		

**Scribe:**

Cliff Braam

**Minutes:**

- The meeting began at approximately 1:00 p.m.

**Task I – Data Review**

Cliff reviewed safety belt use data extracted from the 2003 Crash Facts book for safety belt non-compliance for fatal crashes. The high percentages of fatalities involving unbelted drivers/occupants further emphasizes the need for improvements in the overall compliance rates.

**2003 Seat Belt Usage Data**

Total Fatalities: 1552 broken down by:

Drivers Killed:	913
Passengers Killed:	388
Motorcyclist Killed:	97
Bicyclist Killed:	14
Pedestrians Killed:	140

Seat Belt data only applies to drivers and passengers.

Drivers killed that were unbelted:	380 (41.6% of all drivers killed)
Passengers killed that were unbelted:	<u>174</u> (44.9% of all passengers killed)
	<b>554 total unbelted fatalities</b>
	<b>(42.5% of all vehicle occupant fatalities and 36% all fatalities)</b>

**Spring Click It or Ticket Campaign**

Jill gave the group an update/overview of the upcoming spring campaign and said that there was going to be a special emphasis placed on compliance in pick up trucks. She said that there was going to be a pick up truck demo from the NHTSA and that N.C. had been selected as one of the

demo sites. Part of this effort will also involve specific messaging and will include federally funded advertising. There will be a national ad that will be aired in N.C. with a separate ad focusing on pick up truck running two weeks prior to the campaign. Jill said that N.C. will likely continue to run the ad and that robust earned media will be developed. This is an opportunity to hit home with this over represented group.

## **Task II – Strategies**

The group next began to discuss the strategy of adding insurance points for safety belt compliance violations along with the strategy of removing safety belt exemptions for farm and commercial vehicles.

There was a lot of discussion on these two issues along with other issues that needed to be considered. In the end, the group decided to compose on all inclusive strategy will the following elements:

- Mandate safety belt usage for **all** vehicles except as exempt by Federal Standards,
- Mandate safety belt usage for **all** seating positions in a vehicle,
- Increase fines for non-compliance from \$25 per violation to \$100 per violation<sup>1</sup>,
- Assess one driver's license point to the operator's license for non-compliance<sup>2</sup>,
- Assess one insurance point to the operator for non-compliance<sup>3</sup> and
- Change the N.C. vehicle inspection process so that all applicable vehicles are checked to ensure that safety belts are present and operational.

<sup>1</sup>*Fines are to be assessed to each unbelted occupant over the age of 16 in the vehicle. For each occupant under the age of 16, the fine, per unbelted occupant, shall be assessed to the operator of the vehicle.*

<sup>2</sup>*Driver's license points shall only be assessed for violations involving the operator or passengers under the age of 16 and shall be limited to one point per violation (i.e. the operator will not be assessed points for occupants over the age of 16 and neither will the occupant.)*

<sup>3</sup>*Insurance points shall only be assessed for violations involving the operator or passengers under the age of 16 and shall be limited to one point per violation (i.e. the operator will not be assessed points for occupants over the age of 16 and neither will the occupant.)*

The group felt like the data supported taking drastic measures in an effort to further increase safety belt usage in North Carolina and to reduce the number of fatalities associated with motorist who do not buckle up.

Cliff will draft the revised strategy and send out to everyone for comments prior to the next Executive Committee meeting on January 26, 2005.

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: March 30th, 12:30, GHSP Office (lunch will be provided)